DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/ODC/MR
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among the Montagnards who make up 70 per cent of the province population. Some of their hamlets voted for him almost unanimously. The isolated area of Plei Doch in the far northwest of the province, for example, gave Uyen 1776 votes to his nearest competitor's 99, while Plei Phemge, southeast of Pleiku, went for Uyen by 850 votes to the next candidate's 22.

5. Uyen had certain special advantages over the other candidates. Born in An Khe on March 1, 1926, when that western Binh Dinh area was still a part of Pleiku province, he was the only candidate born in the highlands, and probably the only one to speak Bahnar and Jarai. He has been in Pleiku city longer than most of his fellow civil servants can remember--at least fifteen years. Although Uyen himself denies involvement with any political party, the secretary general of the Binh Dinh Progressive Nationalist Movement claims him as a member of the PNM chapter now being formed in Pleiku. Uyen is also reportedly the owner of the Hotel Hoi An, some apartment houses in Pleiku, and some vehicles which transport goods between Pleiku and Qui Nhon. He is said to further supplement his income by taking advantage of his job as private secretary to the Province Chief to demand money for expediting matters requiring the Province Chief's decision. Thus he apparently had the wherewithal to do what all observers agree he did--buy enough votes to win the election.

6. The usual local technique of doing this is also the simplest--sending a representative to various hamlets to distribute money and ask the recipients to vote for a given candidate. The Montagnards are especially susceptible, because lacking meaningful contact with the candidates and unable to distinguish among them, they have no reason not to fulfill their engagement at the polls with their characteristic reliability. Whether Uyen distributed more money than the other candidates or simply did it more adroitly has not been determined. In any case, he swept a number of hamlets in which at least two of his opponents had been confident of substantial support.

7. The second finisher, LTC Nguyen Thanh Van, had the advantage of controlling numerous cadre in the province by virtue of his position as II CTZ RD Cadre director; he benefited from certain other official support; and, a Catholic, he reportedly enjoyed the backing of the province Nhan Xa organization. The third finisher, Capt. Pham Phung, finished first in Pleiku city, but he had only spotty success in rural areas. According to the Deputy Province Chief, Phung had the support of the province Free Democratic Force organization. Capt. Ton That Viet Hung, who finished fourth, had a record of spectacular

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corruption and electoral strength (Ref A) which produced fears that he might win; but the pattern of his vote, paralleling that of LTC Van, left him with a little less than the latter in both Pleiku city and outside.

8. The losing candidates have not let their reaction to the result rest at the level of abstract surprise. At least one has petitioned Saigon for an investigation. The charges in the petition are twofold that GVN administrative personnel assigned to mechanical tasks at the polls (clipping voting cards, sealing ballots, etc.) influenced the voters, and that the Province Chief arbitrarily rejected Village Council nominees for election committeemen. The Deputy Province Chief dismisses the first charge as baseless. As the election committee appointments were handled at District level, the province authorities were unable to comment immediately on this question. At any rate, the whole episode of the election is clearly a source of acute embarrassment to Pleiku officialdom. Mr. Uyen's unexpectedly lavish winning margin was in itself awkward for the Province Chief; and the Deputy Province Chief expressed the wish that fewer of his friends had run, because "I have now lost all but one."

9. The Saigon authorities have two weeks from the election day to decide whether a formal investigation should be conducted. Meanwhile, Uyen, all complacency, attributes is success to having cultivated a good "father-son" relationship with the Montagnards, as well as to his having a superior understanding of the population's aspirations in general. His enemies regard him as a man who has used the proceeds from selling official favors in order to buy a position in which he can do the same thing on a larger scale. Even if their accusations are wide of the mark, a danger remains in principle. If the electorate is as out of touch with its potential representatives as was apparently true in this case, the voters cannot measure candidates by a standard of quality or even prestige, let alone by their political views.

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ORIGIN/ACTION

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NEA	CU	INR
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E	P	IO
L	FBO	AID
		12
JS	VTC	RSS Simon
10	1	1
AGR	COM	FRB
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR
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ARMY	CIA	NAVY
2	16	5
OSD	USIA	NSA
34	10	3
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TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : BANGKOK, CINCPAC FOR POLAD, DANANG, PARIS(2) FOR VIET-NAM MISSION, VIENTIANE

FROM : American Embassy SAIGON

DATE: November 25, 1969

SUBJECT : Upper House Fixes Procedures for Determining Who Runs for Re-election in 1970

REF :

1. The Upper House met November 19 and designated December 30 as the date for drawing lots to determine which Senators will serve three-year terms as specified in Article 33 of the Constitution. It will be recalled that there are currently only 59 Senators since Senator Tran Dien was killed in the Tet offensive. In view of this the Upper House decided that only 29 Senators will serve three years.

2. In accordance with procedures voted in the November 19 session, each Senator will draw a lot individually. A control committee headed by the Chairman of the Internal Rules and Affairs Committee, Tran Ngoc Nhuan, and composed of representatives of the two blocs and the independent group of Senators, will assist. The procedure agreed upon, proposed by Senator Nguyen Tu Ban, follows:

(a) in alphabetical order, each Senator will draw a lot from Box A, which will contain lots each bearing a number from 1 to 59;
(b) a Senator on the control committee will draw a lot from Box B, which will also contain lots bearing a number from 1 to 59;
(c) another Senator on the control committee will draw a lot from Box C, which will contain 30 lots marked "6-year term" and 29 marked "3-year term." The lots taken from Boxes B and C will be given to the Chairman of the control committee, who will open the lot from Box B and read aloud the number thereon. The Senator who has drawn the same number from Box A will acknowledge this. The Chairman of the control committee will then open and read aloud the lot from Box C, which will indicate either a six or three-year term for the respective Senator, who will acknowledge this by signing his name on the lot drawn from Box C. A Senator who cannot attend the December 30 session may designate by letter someone to draw in his stead.

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